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THE ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A COLLECTION OF DIFFERENCES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL FOR AMERICAN CRAFTSMEN
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF JEWELRY/METALCRAFTS

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FOREWORD

I find rifts to exist in the presence of my consciousness. These splits are such that I perceive my living force to be essentially derived from contrasts. The nature of these contrasts assumes a multitude of forms with conflicting thoughts/ideas, discordant emotions and disputes of an internal order. As much as my mind seeks to synthesize these matters, there is no complete resolution. These competing factors combine to place the mind within a continually polarized condition. Immersed in this tension, the consciousness can respond to this type of inner bondage with further self-search and careful introspection. The pursuit and inward probing can ultimately find no way to reconcile the conflicting conditions. Release is achieved through the act and efforts of the individual's self-projection. This personal attempt casts off the grasp of inner contentions by coming forth vitally and by surfacing with works of creation.

The artist/thinker works primarily from the source of the self. This source of inner consciousness proceeds as a complex, fluid process. Projection from this inner source allows brief glimpses of the continuum within. When creative works surface, they may be considered only as visible fragments of the entire self. Through a series of these

incomplete statements, the artist's self-description is circumscribed. Comprehension comes through inference.

Another aspect of the artistic endeavor is that one is engaged in the personal attempt. Despite thwarted efforts, the aspiring creator continues to seek and strive. The desire for self-extension is branded on the artistic mind. Beyond intent, there is active attempt to find suitable means for expression. The artist's search, I think, is based upon a sense of insufficiency for qualifying aesthetic matters. From this inherent discontent comes the pursuit and attempt to uncover and formulate the individual statement. Through the personal endeavor, the artwork becomes the account of subjective labors.

Since my source as the self is based upon the perception of contrasts, there is the need to address the polarized condition. I see this dualized state to characterize the ever-present living dilemma. To recognize this, I find myself faced with an expansive and most general issue. My initial attempt to approach a topic of such scale is offered in the form of a personal essay. The breadth of its treatment only serves to outline my thoughts and provide the basis for the written material to follow. From what I sense to be life's universal dilemma, one thing does stand clear - I am provoked. My evidence from this polar perception is not only metalwork, but creative writing. I have found these two expressive forms to complement and embody my particular manner of self-projection.

My written thesis venture is presented as a collection in which I am the primary source. In part, I have shunned the traditional view of the thesis as a pedantic paper and have opted for a more creative format. The second portion of my presentation is an assemblage of various writings consisting of short essays, brief imaginations, poetry and prose. Occasionally, I have found that a sentence or two can have special significance. These expressive fragments are of singular worth, yet all press on toward the predominant theme. Through both content and form, these messages speak and give the illustration of contrasts. I address matters largely abstract as well as details, small and fresh. Likewise, the entire thesis format juxtaposes the highly formal with the utterly personal.

This collection, which I simply call "differences", is one whereby the singular personality issues forth. From the condition of perceived oppositions, the aspiring individual carries on with personal attempts. Behind the urging of the unquestionable force, the creative effort arises.

ESSAY

A dilemma presents the individual with impossible conditions for which there is no resolution. One's mind is seized by the grip of opposition and consumed by the dual matter. The individual's consciousness assumes the burden of the clash and becomes the interface, or the boundary where the two forces meet. Enduring this split, the mind seeks a new recourse employing the energy released from disunion. Through the continual search, the individual finds that the dilemma provides the catalyzing element for striving as a means of transformation.

The dilemma is a condition of irreducible odds in which one cannot make a clear choice that may lead to a satisfactory solution. Although the dilemma may be highly complex, the instance quite often involves a major decision between two alternatives. In my following discussion, I will refer to the dilemma as a general term denoting a double-faced problem. With this as the case, the dilemma may be perceived as a condition of duality.

There is little to be gained from the naming of dual situations. To cite specific examples would only identify. A description of the varieties of contention is beyond this essay's scope. The major matter here is to consider the nature of that which is dual and how one may respond to the condition of dilemma.

To characterize the dual nature of dilemma, "polarization" most aptly describes this condition. In this state, two opposing halves are locked in their dispute. They persist in colliding without human regard. The resulting rift provokes a violent, compelling force equally attractive and repulsive. Man, too, is drawn in with unbroken fixation. The dilemma's two forces are bonded by their juxtaposed stance. As pairs, they coexist within their active mutual denial. Through this manner of self-assault, the union of their disunion is joined by a single sheer force. The dynamics of dualism creates an energetic equation of one.

The condition of two opposing forces presumes to be greater than the self, yet it is through the self that conflict is perceived. Dualism does not appear to exist in exclusion of the mind. Without the agent of consciousness and thought, there would be no predicament. Dualism only exists when it is perceived. I hold that the mind instigates and deepens all manner of conflict. I also believe that, through the facility of the consciousness and the mind, the energy derived from opposition may be used to transport, if not transform the individual.

Two varieties of the dilemma exist. The first arises when the mind sees the opposition as occurring at once. Bursting forth, it comes as a simultaneous flash of impossible intensity which one cannot bear. It is a cruel coincidence. This type of dilemma arises from a particular fault of the mind. To its detriment, the great mind can

see. As vision can partake of all wondrous things with a glance, the consciousness can realize the opposition in an instant. This is not assumed through progressive thought, but revealed by the streaking of insight across the senses. This perception is more one of intuition than of recognition. In the same way "Eureka!" dawns upon one, so strikes dilemma. This vision, however, is not one of inspiration, but one of the instant of impaling the mind upon itself. This moment cripples with a stroke.

In coincidence, the dilemma offers absolutely no hope as it staggers all the senses. It does, however, lead to a second dualistic view. Through the medium of the versatile mind, other means are sought. As much as the mind is able to see in one moment, the mind thinks of the dual matter sequentially. In this way, consciousness attempts to deal with polarization through alternation. This oscillation process is characterized by a swinging between the two opposing poles. Polarization is made comprehensible only through the process of alternation. Besides enabling recognition, oscillation also permits the consciousness to function within difficult circumstances. Perceiving the dilemma in terms of regulation will slightly relieve the impasse of its grip, yet, nonetheless, the conflict still remains.

The dilemma proceeds to heighten the strain by demanding that one choose. Between the two equally unsatisfactory alternatives lies utter despair. The thought of making an impossible choice has a dreadful effect, rendering one torn,

lost, totally helpless and consumed by terrible fear. Ultimately, and if sustained, the dilemma can drive one on to self-destruction.

How does one survive the condition of dilemma? The dual stalemate provokes both passive and active responses with anxiety as motivation for them all. While the passive reaction cannot effectively appease the predicament, the active response offers more promise.

The ultimate passive response is that of paralysis. With this, predicament overwhelms to render one in a catatonic state. In this severe and extreme condition, the individual relinquishes the rights of survival. A more moderate form of self-destruction comes from the gradual breakdown. In this, dualism triumphs through the crumbling, reducing to fragments and the final scattering of the shredded soul. Another avenue of response involves a manner of retreat. One can recoil from the unbearable scene to live in a distorted mental realm. Whether harboring the self in fantasy or shrinking back with terror and fear, one still can choose to retire oneself to the autistic world. The last kind of passive response is to submit to the polar alternation. This allows one to be captivated or entranced by the process of oscillation. More than mesmerized, one becomes anesthetized to the violent force of the dual powers. To be removed from the dilemma in this hypnotic

way, one is content to secede from the disunion.

The dual condition is not as hopeless as one might expect, for some form of remedy may be gained through action. By the act of applying oneself, at least the spell is broken. To remain passive only assures this force of its power.

The first act can be that of outright denial. To say 'no' can have two meanings. Negation may take the form of closing one's eyes to the predicament. One may proclaim it does not exist. This denial is one of delusion. The other 'no' refuses to tolerate the dual condition with an intent for future action. One may stand or take flight. The decision to run can display a small measure of courage if one believes that the pursuing power may be outpaced. The running also may serve to provide a temporary relief from the dual stranglehold and allow one time to devise an alternate plan. The danger of running is that it may take the form of various disguises and self-deception. To escape by running, however, stimulates the strength of that which is pursuing. To live convicted to an escape is a dreadful existence. Invariably the pursuit ends at the point of giving up or taking a final stand. In relinquishing the self to the triumphant powers, there can only be a remote satisfaction from the attempt.

The act of taking a stand is always coupled with a certain attitude or viewpoint toward oneself and the dilemma. If one sees the predicament to be a massacring force, then

it will be so. On the other hand, should the scene be perceived as a condition that can be reckoned with, then one may see oneself as a mediator. The choice to interpose between the dilemma's two sides does not hope for reconciliation, yet seeks to realize the power of the split as a means of self-reformation.

I would like to introduce the concept of the interface as having significance in the case of the dilemma. By definition, the interface is a surface forming a common boundary between two bodies, spaces or phases. The interface may be seen as an amalgamation of two; however, since the polarized state does not allow for a physically alloyed matter, it does create a single shared presence of two stabilized, but non-merging powers. The combined division and communion of opposing forces constitutes this unique quality of 'between' which I will ascribe to the interface.

The effect of polarization creates this gap which I shall call the interface. The individual occupies this space and functions within the two opposing sides of the dilemma. The individual's mind and consciousness are the media for the interface. As a substance for the perception and transmission of dual forces, I shall consider the mind to perform as the interface in the manner of a membrane. This membrane is therefore living, responsive and seeks to endure. When presented with conflicting conditions, this

membrane of the mind is stimulated to pursue activities of self-preservation and extension.

The first step toward confronting dualism requires accepting the condition of continuing odds. The mind plays host to the conflict. As a membrane, it is porous and receptive, thus allowing for the crossfire of contrasts. Through this accommodation, one commits a daring act of choice. The decision is to remain engaged at the convergence zone. The interface does not seek to absolve or fight conflict, but rather is a conscious choice to remain immersed within the two forces. Without compromising or succumbing to the effects of disunion, the consciousness strives to exist through participation or engagement.

Just as the interface occupies the delicate position of 'between', the mind assumes a stance. The standpoint is composed of the struggle for self-preservation and the wish to extend beyond the predicament. The first of these two is preoccupied with the present state of being, while the second is the desire to become.

Faced with duality's adverse effects, the individual's stance attempts to preserve inner order and balance. The power of the dilemma eternally thwarts all these efforts, so one must persist in bearing life's task by simply being. The standpoint is preserved not so much by attempting to stave off the assaulting dual forces, but through prevailing consciousness and engagement. Self-preservation is never made complete, but is a living process of continuation. The

self is preserved only in that it continues to travel through its difficult existence. 'Being' is one's living presence amidst ongoing conflict, as Baudelaire says, "Man be damned and live!" The membrane of the consciousness is cursed, yet the mind's resilience enables it to breathe, transpire, live, and in this way endure. The standpoint survives dualism to some degree through the process of being.

The other more important aspect of the interface stance is that of seeking or becoming. While one is engaged in the process of being, one is also searching and wanting to become something else. 'Becoming' is also a living process and is one which expects some future change or development towards improving the current state of being. One cannot forever be content to remain in the throes of dilemma, so one seeks to project the self beyond the dual situation. This search is necessarily coupled with an orientation or vision. Whether this orientation is known or unknown to the individual, the search or desire to 'become' can be the substance for the standpoint. The interface stance rises above the uncomfortable position of 'between' by wanting to become. This position or attitude is the intent to extend the self. This search for self-projection is an effective means for offsetting the vertigo of polarization. By focusing on some distant objective, the dilemma's turbulent strength will in effect become stilled or diverted. The personal vision cannot serve to change, but can redirect the

polarized powers. The membrane of the consciousness is able to distract duality through concentration and by wanting to determine and shape the self.

The interface membrane can also be seen as a substance which is able to select a certain element from the polarized condition. The medium of this membrane may be described as being semipermeable, and thus allowing for osmosis. This particular process of transpiration does not necessarily imply incorporation or alteration of the hostile matters, but does allow for a selective manner of passage. The interface membrane does not neutralize or dilute the powers of dual forces, but serves to extract and distill a certain ingredient from the exchange. That extract is energy.

The energy from polarization is in itself a pure power. The consciousness can perceive of this force as destructive, overwhelming or simply as energy for self-extension. This energy is able to catalyze the self and initiate personal direction. Through concentration one is able to avert dilemma's disastrous effects and convert that polar energy into fuel for the personal projection. The interface position acts by transfusion to yield energy for the individual's volition.

The transfer of energy moves one to act and be transported from the basis of the standpoint. This view from the stance offers release from dilemma through the hopeful process of becoming. The act of 'becoming' achieves not completion but a continuation obtained through striving.

Striving is 'becoming' enacted. What does one strive toward? The personal vision can hold on to a firm objective and measurable achievement, or simply be the attempt to endure. Either instance is effective for offsetting dilemma as long as one believes in that single goal. One may strive for oneself or one may strive for others, yet both values are reduced to the same desire to 'become'. To grow, develop and continually develop is the object of one's interface stance. This process of striving seeks direction but no end and uses dualism's energy to be self-sustaining.

The continual act of striving within dilemma cannot leave the individual unchanged. Through ceaseless effort and self-extension one is transformed. This change is not unworldly or beyond the human limit in the way that transcendence carries one away. To transcend duality with a cathartic tranquil response would passify and detach the beholder. Instead, this transformation is an earthly transportation and brings the result of being carried through. Essentially, there is no loss of contact with dilemma because, as the interface, one stays 'between'. One remains within the predicament and is catalyzed by dual energy to move toward the personal direction. The change which occurs does not yield a sudden transfigured form, but gives rise to a new inner growth with a constant reforming process. Through successive adaptations the individual is shaped by the process of living progression. From striving alone, gains and new personal form may be achieved through the

persistent efforts to 'become'.

The process of continuing personal growth and projection is the only means for enduring dilemma. One can perceive the polarized state as supplying the vital force for self-building rather than destruction. To move and act out of the interface with a positive progressive attitude enables one to outlive predicaments. I see dilemmas as the ultimate provocative source, and from these conditions the individual is stirred to search and find reformation.

This proposal I have set forth is a form of individuation. This viewpoint holds that one is able to determine and form the self distinctly. From the very onset of dilemma, the individual makes the choice to remain engaged. As the interface, one can continue to arbitrate from the standpoint of the self. Proceeding with the orientation as a guide, one can choose to make adaptations on the individual's own terms. In Sartre's words, "I am by my choices." As long as one perceives the self as free to make personal choices, one can think, do and be, despite dualism. Rather than be usurped by dilemma's force, causing one to surrender or be anaesthetized, the individual can assert the self through striving. By utilizing the energy of opposition, one can move toward self-determination and assist in the personal evolution. The dilemma's enigma and strength may be great, yet man has the power to prevail and transform

himself indefinitely.

In a sense, one is a passenger or vehicle for dualistic powers. One is moved by and carried through the dilemma. The thrust of this polar energy can be employed and applied with will toward the personal destination. With no arrival, there is only endeavor. From this journey or projection into the ever receding future, one proceeds onward and thus becomes transformed.

ASSORTED PROSE, POETRY AND
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

In Praise of the Metaphor

The metaphor works by suggestion. It is illusory in some respects, yet there is, I believe, so much more to be had from the veiled presentation. A message may, of course, be expository with a direct treatment of terms. Such kind of discourse has some merit by being clear. The intent to be clear may be an effort in earnest, but often the result is encumbered by excessive terms and neurotic levels of substantiation. For some disciplines, explicit language is appropriate if not necessary. In these cases, it only serves to perpetuate the dogma upon which the medium is based. This kind of language cannot be withdrawn without the collapse of the discipline. Needless to say, one never exults over the pedantic. One is simply informed. That information may be a discovery, but it is not in the full sense, a revelation.

By replacing the objective language with that of a more subjective mode, the expression is made more expansive and infinitely more sensitive. The metaphor is able to denote the message through analogy or parallel likeness, yet also connotation ensues. This implicit manner is not intended to obscure as it is to enlighten one to things which otherwise could not be expressed. The nature of implied language is one of supposition. The device used to convey the meaning operates in a circumscribed fashion, encompassing that which is unapproachable by laying a trail of hints. It offers an illumination of an idea. The obvious and literal do not

illuminate and only serve by being concise, however crass. By leaving one to surmise, delicacy and sensitivity can be projected. The metaphor's primary intent is not to be vague, but to allow for more subtle treatment of matters.

The metaphor is illusive by never really laying claim to a statement; however, neither does it leave the recipient totally lost. The metaphor presents basic information in the form of an image from which one proceeds to extract an extended meaning. Implication can be further enhanced through elaboration, dramatic juxtaposition and alteration of tonality. These factors all serve to heighten the implication. The result is that an extraordinary meaning has been attached above and beyond the image, whether subtle or strong. It is a play upon one's sensitivity, intellectually as well as in the evocative realm. The implicit exerts a powerful force because it is slightly mystifying.

The most important aspect of the metaphor is that it demands participation of the recipient in order to be revealed. It is through the perceiver that the message is formulated and endowed with personal significance. Through the imagination one fills gaps between that suggested. The translation continues with more unraveling of the veil. Eventually, the hint is made complete through the fulfilled extension from inference, and is personally tailored in the process. In this way, the shrouded message is reinterpreted, if not recreated. The metaphor is thus transformed. It is the individual who enables the translation, mediating

between the shaded source and the ultimate recreation.

The metaphor works only for those able to detect it. There is a responsibility attached, for failure to participate can mean either disinterest or incapacity for such endeavors. Unless there is a commitment to see through the symbolic disguise, the message is lost. To decipher the implied requires attention and perception; one also must possess the desire for understanding the wealth of meaning. If one should be compelled to follow that of the elusive, the reward lies in the exercise of the imagination and the illumination of the untold. As the embodiment of expression, the metaphor stands supreme.

I recall lying in this bath tub. It was the only refuge from the intolerable afternoon heat, a season when even the cold water runs warm. A liquid refreshment, nonetheless. I lay there, my body's color merging with this porcelain pink. Hot pink, cold pink, with this tepid medium between!

Basking in this submerged state, I sensed the mingling of two fluids, one transparent and granted a full freedom, the other self-contained. As I lay there dissolving, I casually made small motions, observing wavelets and the effects of drips. How responsive this stuff is! Now, in giving swift vigorous movements, the liquid became quite thoroughly aroused. From this great commotion came the heavy rolls of backwash, taking my body up in the sway of these deep tidal swells. With this gradually subsiding, my limbs joined in with the soothing lull becoming light, floating, suspended. I drifted off vacantly.

Out of this empty bliss, my dimmed thoughts gave way to imagination . . . a water scene, no, a river floating slowly, moving past banks lush with greenery, the heaviness of the atmosphere made bright by a few flowers afloat, the tendrils of drifting vegetation becoming intermingled with human hair, then entwined with a pale outstretched form, a once-living body now delivered by the river's flow. Ah yes, Ophelia!

In reliving this image, it was curious to see that the tub water had become quite still. To my amazement and

horror, it remained very still. No movement, no breathing. This once expressive surface was now glassy, undisturbed and revealing the presence of no one. The floating figure was now rejoined with its original liquid source.

After a passing of long moments over this ghastly stagnant scene, there stirred those faint signs of betrayal. At first, it was not quite apparent. Then seen more clearly, a slight flutter played across the smooth surface. This feeble ruffle sent off other gentle murmurs in a manner of fluid articulation. As this grew to assume a more steady pace, the ripples moved as echoes emerging from some center deep within. This regular pattern strengthened, expanded to fill and create now a reverberating chamber. Pulsating, pounding, the water resounded to the beat of the heart's generator.

With a sharp gasp, I broke through to be free of the weight of this extreme suffocation. Air! To breathe that sweet air more than offered great release from my sustained, yet still living bondage. To be enchanted by immersion such as this is further proof to myself that I am the medium of liberation.

Occasionally an acute moment strikes, in which sensation achieves pure emanation. Sense perception becomes heightened, magnified, glorified, yet the effect is likened to an enormous, sudden contraction as the focal powers of all senses are swiftly seized, compounded into this stupendous cramp. Such pain, such pleasure in only what intensity affords. Vision is insufferable, of impossible clarity. Hearing is acute and penetrating. Smells, oh the smells! The body is a tingling mass, an omnivorous receptor.

The rush of things in passing during this country drive spark off this moment of advanced sensation. Colors are no longer simply colorful, but rather are painful vibrations. Image clarity stabs your eyes. Those things distant seem to be leaping toward you in a crazed, violent fashion. You would wish to close your eyes from this unbearable barrage, but cannot. Such is enchantment.

The ear no longer waits to receive sounds. It outreaches amidst symphonic waverings alternately consumed by the total unanimous mingling and alternately focused on that one distant tone, that one small utterance. The audition loses its linear aspect as you discover sound to be a swollen field broadly vibrating.

Odors, usually faint and only dimly suggestive, now rush through the nostrils, throwing the head back - now cows, now grass, now damp earth. I taste them.

I hold a phantom cigarette between my fingers and wonder why my hand feels so light and remote. My body

floats. Physical sensation now leaves behind the external, instead I feel blood and hormones, coursing, throbbing.

My bruised eyes, my accosted ear, smells, touch, the absent/present body - for this one briefly enormous moment I am a total recipient, bedazzled and dazed, consumed by the pure bombarding of stimuli. It cannot be that I have not been witness to the heavenly awakening of the senses.

There is this vague feeling which I fear. I am aware of it when the fingertips start to become numb. It is as if the blood suddenly decided to turn back a little early. Drained of their nourishment, these extremities grow pale, dull, devoid of sensation. Once so receptive, they are now glacial tips. Remote, detached, yet they are there.

I cannot understand this deprivation. Is this born from within, or some exterior affliction? Perhaps I have touched some foul substance, thus launching this insidious contagion. It is poisonous, even vile. Is there no antidote, must I wait for it to run its course?

Quite possibly I am suffering from some external scourge. The effect of this assault is a punishment to all extreme. In this way, a general anaesthetic is offered as conditional relief for what otherwise would be felt.

The gradual atrophy, a wasting away of my tissue - it is clear I am an early victim of the seeds of an other/outer decay.

I am aware of skin. It is this substance which divides that within from that without. This delicate membrane withholds, protects and reveals all that passes between. It is a barrier, yet it breathes.

Skin is able to both conceal and reveal. It expresses, transfiguring the glorious and the gross. Conveying health, it appears with this radiant emission. As a passenger of years, it is destined to suffer, weather and finally grow withered. The face and the body are evidence of that lived.

This skin is a wall from which we cannot fully withdraw. Despite our appearances, there resides this undisclosed soul. Anguish, affliction and most villainous thoughts - they dwell there. Equally unknown is this richness which we hold, an inner sanctum unspoken. It is this skin which makes us so singular.

Receiving, responding, the skin is that surface. There is reddening from the blush and in anger. It is pale from shock and waxen in death. While so sensitive to rude blows and cruel wounds, the bruise is absorbed, the cut becomes a scar. Skin heals, but remembers.

Days are so rich lately. Days are so swamped with stimuli. Sights, information, a bombardment to all perception.

There is a point in the process of looking forward where one starts looking back. A brief glance over the shoulder, a moment's stare - receiving, intensely enriched, wanting impossibly to linger.

At times, lucidity is so sharp, so inwardly bright, as if formed by some crystal cohesion. At other times, the muddle is pure quagmire. Encumbered to an excess, one feels sucked from, deplete - a deficiency which makes your blood run clear. Dissipation gravely deepens to slowly stretch you out, prompting severe deformation. Drawn further and beyond, your limbs and skin strain in the anguish from dismemberment. Suddenly, a slight tear shows and then spreads to shred - your vital parts/the continuum violently strewn as if character were a disposable entity.

Then comes the arrested moment of realization. This explosion and frenzy freezes. All ceases with this pause . . . whereupon your aborted fragments are recollected tenderly, fastidiously to be cast into the reservoir of preserve, and in so doing providing the substance for further melding, molding and formulation.

Present turns to past so quickly, almost immediately. It would be instantaneous were it not for the mind's retention. In the recalling, this sense of lingering pervades. At first, it is fresh, flashing bright sensation. Then, inhabiting the soul it dwells as a soaking ember. Finally, assuming an ash, it is extinguished, spent, exhausted. Able to be scattered by a mere breath. Consummation.

The first, no second frost. The first one bringing a harvest of green tomatoes. The second bringing breath's vapor.

Grass, now crisply crunching. Green sheathed in death ice.

Sometimes I think of how the body is able to rid itself of poison. How absolutely healthy! Purging oneself of unwanted matter, waste. If only this daily sacrament could be extended to the regions of the mind.

Hermetic, i.e., sealed off. This isolated existence is one untouched, untainted by an otherwise hostile environment. That ideal situation is one in which the substance in question is completely self-absorbed in the stew of its own juices. The vacuumed state is one free from all manner of contamination. While canned things stay pure, they are nonetheless not fresh.

I am extremely fond of the clam. I sense a shared spirit. We both dwell in containers of our own making.

The civilized 'we' attempt to clarify priorities.
The uncivilized 'we' attempt to escape fear.

Eggs! Eggs! Eggs! - fried, scrambled, curried, devilled There's the noble omelet, its tender fold cradling, embracing nearly any substance. Indeed the most accommodating egg form. Then there's the lovely coddled egg. Only coaxed with gentle steaming and under watchful eye is its delicate perfection achieved. In its natural state, it is that golden orb which slithers on a carpet of semi-gell. To scramble is to commit sacrilege of the raw.

Eggs! - such are women!

I fear I am hard-boiled.

Refolding the brown paper bag - its goods gone, its service over, you are a veteran for the shelf.

Now find those folds, snap taut, command this collapsible. Crackle those crumples, smooth, oh soothe those unsightly rumples, and finally flatten to store away neatly, and respectfully . . . for next you'll carry out trash.

I have no appetite. No, I am not satiated or suffering from recent overindulgence; it is to the contrary. Deep within there is this hollow pit of my stomach which yearns to remain empty still. The thought of anything entering my system repulses me. My body would instantly reject any violating matter.

The indifference to enticement is nothing unusual for me as I find there are pleasures to be had from emptiness. This abstention is a manner of purging oneself of all previous waste, a kind of purification. While the ascetic achieves hallowed state through a rigid self-denial, I likewise prefer to remain drawn up tight, ever slightly hungry - on the edge of desire.

I eat politely. Dinnertime presents a sequence of conventions with which I most willingly comply. This social act requires that one pay proper heed to etiquette. After perfunctory grace, one awaits the subtle signal to commence with the meal. You display prowess with the utensil, knowledge of the napkin, and nibble delicately on sweet and sumptuous morsels. Is this food? The ceremony continues from one course to the next with always passing deference to the elders. Conversation is quite light and the portions equally so. Satisfaction is had by all. With the arrival of coffee, one salutes the cook and the meal. "Superlative! First-rate!" The social communion is complete. With the

service now over, I find it amusing that we say, "Please excuse me" - as if to pardon this very act.

I consume voraciously. I cannot get enough. I am unable to be fulfilled. With abandonment and zeal, I descend upon this feast. The carnal beast that I am, let flesh speak to flesh! With all delicacy aside, I commit the incorrigible. In an appeal to all that which is sensuous, please feed my depraved earthly senses! Taste, texture, touch - I ravish in the scene before me, taking in and absorbing all that my system craves. As a Roman, I pause briefly, only to continue to devour.

Dear Doctor,

You see, I have this tumor. It lies right under my heart. It has been malignant lately - a nasty flare-up. One of those seizures, in fact, ravaging through my system and rendering me as another.

How did I treat this malady? With every remedy I could possibly conjure up. At first, I ignored the symptoms until the condition became undeniable. There followed the usual range of self-deceptions, to no avail. Then I tried plying myself with libations, but only to further spreading and deepening. Finally, I chose to cut it out.

Oh, such harsh act and in vain, for it still lies there under my heart. I would be inhuman to live without it.

Instead, I see I must be host to this pestilence. No, I don't pray for remission. Rather than seek mercy, I accommodate this tumor without succumbing to it. I isolate the tumor . . . it becomes benign. It still lies there lodged under my heart, but now as a merely annoying cyst.

Your Patient

Dear Patient,

Though I know not of the source of this "tumor" of which you speak, I sense that it is purely undaunted effort which seems to give you the strength for recovery. If, as you say, you are unable to shake off, cast out the source of

this anguish, you are learning to accommodate this hostile matter into your system by surrounding it with an envelope of sorts. This manner of cushioning pain is much like the way an oyster secretes around a grain of sand, thus creating a pearl. As with the adaptable nature of bodies, the mind likewise is endowed with a similar ability to reform itself through change of latitude by the act of sheer will.

While the mind is the instrument which obtains these successful recoveries for you, it is also that which affords you such struggle and sickness. If left unattended, without concern for proper health, it can grow over the personality and infect it such that there is no longer a polite regard for the personality's harmony. The mind is an expansive entity whose outlets are unlimited in number, virtually without obstructions, capable of being absolutely insatiable and often cursed by having no temporary release from its pervasive consuming presence. The expanding mind is able to deepen towards gratifying ends, yet also amplify excessively to swollen, near-explosive thresholds where the thinker spends himself totally.

As evident by your mental control, I see that this sickness stems not from a weakness, rather from an excess of energies, an overflow of forces. The mind is weak when left to its own devices. You allow it an excessive freedom and are intoxicated by the purity of mental emanation which may result in internal theft and paralysis. The mind is in need of obstacles, but not of its own design. It needs to be

conditioned, not so much by your own self-discipline, but by finding a satisfactory channel which imposes its own restrictions. In locating a self-exclusive boundary, your mind will find a test and means for challenge and creation.

One must choose carefully what one wishes to render, and often, as it may be unknowable, the mysterious must serve as the concrete. Abounding mysteries exist in one's multiplicity, awaiting investigation and all calling for your crusade. Expect not resolution, but simply to be led further. Let not the enigmatic serve to deter your ceaseless strivings, as that virtue is the beast which will carry you forward and at the same time attempt to usurp you.

Courage! Continue with your surging energies and undiminished intensity, yet it is only through purposeful application that your expanding endeavors will find positive form, and you, find consolidation.

Sincere regards,

Dr.

Rx: Pearls, those wonderful pearls.

One evening a particular stands out in my mind. A small-discussion was being held concerning the cyclical nature of things. The numerous examples were cited, the case material presented, the testimonies given - this went on at some great length. In the midst of all this, I felt in myself the onset of a strange kind of withdrawal. There came this odd feeling of detachment through which I was able to sit there, yet be elsewhere. Looking at them blankly, I watched as their words trailed off into a remote collection of meaningless sounds. The cadence of their voices rose and fell in tunes of a graceful pattern. The steady rhythmic lull of their distant tones took me further into my self-absorption. The room began to recede.

As I looked onto the dark surface in my mind, a clear bright image arose. Freshly drawn and still slowly moving, the arc proceeded on its designated path. Upon completion, this curve continued on its course in a deliberate manner of passage. Again the same phase passed around this track as if moved by some central dictation. More circles came impressing their way, layering with the traces remaining. These figures issued forth, faster and making more, generating tremendous velocity and speed. The momentum of orbits now whirled erratically and beyond control to test the endurance of my senses. This grew to assume such an insane pitch that I feared I had reached my threshold.

Suddenly this madness of circles drove me to proclaim, "No! One must cut through all this hopeless fixation! Yes,

the circle is pure and the cycle does flow, but just where does this single idea lead to? I assure you these worldly cycles most certainly proceed without regard for you, and for you who has no regard for yourself. Do you give yourself up to this strange compelling force to be sucked into the swirl of its vortex? Tell me you're content to be taken. Be seduced, place your whole faith in the belief that it all will just happen. To lay claim to all cycles as your method of life is the easiest means of summation. No thought, no effort, no extension - this is simply submission. You claim you are helpless, yet isn't this how you perceive of yourself? Are you not able to direct your own actions and assume responsibility? Perhaps there is something I do not understand, some great magic to be had from circular effect - hypnosis, enchantment or trance? I cannot take cycles as a viable stance and as a means for your self-resurrection. So, do just sit by and let fate develop and your salvation will come riding with Messiah!

"Instead, I propose, no, I insist that you draw lines through circles. You must bisect those sweet glossy wholes. This is a determinate act of outright defiance, but also of self-arbitration. To affirm oneself not only breaks this captivation, but gives rise to your own kind of power. This cyclical energy, which attempts to consume, can be broken and channeled to your needs. Gather this force, receive it in your constitution, and the energy will spur on your own self-projection. By moving ever forward, guided by

self-prescription, you will shape and assist in your personal procession.

"Strike across the circle, preempt this cycle! The emancipation lies in your own conviction. Seize of yourself rather than be seized. Persist, please, my friends, and do not allow yourself to become one of those who follow rather than believe!"

Statement

The pursuit of Design is based on the attempt to be articulate. This process of clarification requires the ability to extract from visual sources, then reform those elements so as to create a new coherence.

The activity of designing begins with finding the ingredients. Although a search for the right source material may be necessary, it is more important to be able to see selectively into the wild visual array confronting one. This specialized vision requires that one subject the visual content to a screening procedure, which causes a kind of dismembering of matter. The significant and primary information must be disassociated from the surrounding data and context in order to perceive it clearly. All this 'otherness' constantly seeks to distract. First comes isolation, then extraction. In this, one plucks from the sea of all that is seen a special fragment of an image. By this act of choice, one has begun to exercise a personal preference, taking only that which is significant and holding promise for future development.

In the next step, the designer imagines an extension of those original elements. This mental projection may be derived intuitively or be based upon a design concept or idea. This formulation of an idea may have been stirred out of the selected fragments or have been the basis for the initial selection. In the case of the clear concept, it may involve the use of time honored themes, current modalities,

serve to demonstrate a break with convention or simply be a whim. Despite the method employed for exercising the idea, it is essential at this phase to be aware of the numerous possibilities and means for projecting this expression.

The extension proceeds with various considerations. It is acted out through impulse and consequent reflection. In the imagination, one conceives of new possibilities for arrangement. This can take place with the existing selected elements, or, if insufficient, one may have to retrace to look for more satisfactory parts. An additional resource avenue involves improvisation or devising new or nonapparent elements which might complement the given situation. This mental reordering may also be guided by the fact that the visual elements in themselves suggest appropriate companionship and combination. As one proceeds, one is guided by their implications. The use of curves seems to suggest continued usage as does the hard-edge manner of work in promoting a similar treatment. To say this is not to be absolute, as often the intent wishes to be an expression of clash rather than concordance. It is not so important that the vocabulary be of consistent usage, but that its use follows a clear, appropriate means of expressing that particular design idea. The sense of 'appropriate' is as subjective as it is individual; however, there does exist a certain specter and parameter within a given sensibility. A violation of this would be overstepping those bounds. To be 'appropriate' involves temperance.

In continuing with the designing process, the thinking, the questioning and rearranging become more intensive as development grows. The nature of the problem is now infinitely more specific. By proceeding more deeply into the design process, the number of possibilities decreases. Successive judgments clarify the situation. There is almost painful attention paid to detail. One approaches a sense of 'fit', as if placement and proportions are right for each other. The work now assumes control and you are simply assisting with the delivery. The sense of arrival is usually quite clear. It tells you there is union.

In retrospect, design is essentially a problem of disentangling the visual. The pursuit begins with an act of clarification and returns to the same premise. In the process, the inkling and the inclination are developed through the engagement of the individual. It is an experiment. Out of imagination and effort, and through the fabric of a sensibility, the visual elements become transformed and distilled anew. In this act, one is able to impart to visual terms qualities both unique and articulate.

On Design

Consider proximity and what it may arouse.
 It is the situation laden with expectation.
 Whether the fragments of once one source,
 Or two bodies near at hand,
 The closer, the more firmly drawn.
 Alternately, we witness the effect of ejection,
 The act of repulsion, arresting that dispersed - and
 The sensation of matter stimulated, however transfixed.
 Regardless of the outcome which we may never know,
 This condition of denied fulfillment bestows the moment
 With exquisite qualities. Excitation - unbearably so.

Consider tangency. There's something exceedingly lovely
 About a point of contact - be it a slight touch on the skin,
 Be it at knifepoint, be it a nudge, a jab, a caress

Consider intersection - a brief moment of certainty.
 Yes. From all those which lead so, there arises
 One second of vibration, the instant of union
 An aura dispelled.
 Out of this luminous source flashes those streaks
 Of unknown extension.

Consider the parallels. It is a hopeless situation
 Of a particular kind of resolve. A co-incidence.
 This constant state of equalized tension
 Bears us this twinning -
 one beyond the congruent
 one beyond that polarized
 a harmony of opposition.
 These taut filaments maintain eternal abeyance,
 Striking a chord which speaks vastly,
 As indeterminate as it is assured.

Oh, sublime line!

Effortlessly, but resolutely you move
in a single path, a faint tracing
of especial significance -
sonorous, beseeching, calling forth
fathoms of divine resonance.

One choral voice.

A breath of vapor
trailing across the page.

Ode

The stringed instrument presents us with its formal stature. None too austere, this body is contoured in full, if not feminine fashion. It is sculpted from the curve and counter curve and made replete by the flourish of detail. This generous form of such amplitude and character would seem incomplete were it not for those filaments streaming forth from the scroll. In stretching, straining across the wide girth, these taut strands press so tenaciously against the body in attempt to hold its breath. By offering restraint, this hollow shell endures, thus assisting in release of the richness of sound.

Ode

The bridge performs quite simply by breaching obstacle or void. This span, this extension stands in testament to gravity's defeat. One is awed, even humbled by its presence. Magnificance. Grace.

This structure of such poise displays its aerial feats by soaring through the freedom of space. The body of both steel and concrete is well-tempered and persevering. The colossal pillars, bearing the load upon which all else depends, stand somber and unyielding. The sinewy cables flex the chords of constraint. From these arched tensile members hang the ribbon of the roadway, like a thin strip of skin. Such a slight reason for this monument!

All elements of this system are only evidence of internal strife - compression, tension. Its firm posture conceals those secret stresses within, absorbed by its static frame. An agony masked by discretion. Such hardship and strain, yet all so delicately tuned. As nerves on the edge of imbalance, but held fast in this paralyzed state. Were it not for its compensating nature, this structure would surely meet abysmal end.

Bearing the impossible with stillness and silence, this edifice is condemned to such survival. Still, it is to our amazement one able to suffer proudly and nobly prevail.

Ode

Stainless steel is a proud, defiant substance. It yields, however stubbornly, and responds only when coaxed, cajoled and seduced as it may seem. In being so defensive against physical force, it likewise resists by defying that brown scourge afflicting other kin. Sterile, always clean, it shimmers unchanged by air.

Somehow stainless seems colder, more harsh, more cruel than others of its ferrous family. It forever shines surgically, distinctly above all others - sharp, noble, pure, unstained. Yet now look carefully and closely, for through all this charisma a gross, coarse grain reveals itself - pitted and pockmarked. What lovely irony!

Critique - Concerning the Proper Use of Technique

Recently, I have become aware of the vast number of developments which are taking place in the artmetal field. New processes, materials and techniques are coming forth, being shared and promoted in an overwhelming fashion. This can be attributed largely to the heightened degree of communication as evidenced by the growing number of symposiums and workshops with specific concerns. In addition, the improved quality and quantity of publications have contributed to the spread of this new information. It appears that this field along with countless others is experiencing an explosion of growth. I acknowledge and welcome this blossoming most warmly, yet still hold some reservations in regard to the direction of this unlimited energy.

As with any kind of large scale expansion, there exists great potential in terms of providing stimulation and exposure. However, there is the danger that this new information may be eagerly consumed and channeled into thoughtless application. A great many of these developments are of a technical nature. This kind of information lends itself to communication particularly well. In the form of technical papers, listing of procedure and information from textbooks, this material is readily available. Advice can be obtained from specialists who frequent the lecture and workshop circuit. All this serves to point out that there is certainly no lack of opportunity to secure technical data. Exposure in itself, however, will not make for understanding.

A major problem appears to arise out of this enthusiastic exchange. There is no question that currently the technically oriented work has been and is receiving considerable recognition. This can lead to the false assumption that the magic lies in the method, or that the establishment and mastery of new techniques will assure successful and significant work. I believe that this kind of attitude can foster a dependence solely on technique as a means of operation, a supposition which will eventually prove to be superficial. The result of this pursuit can only mean that the work derived from this endeavor will be such that the technique assumes the statement. In the extreme, the work becomes simply an overt manifestation of technique. In this instance, the maker has little sense or understanding of the resulting object. This piece then, becomes purely the product of process. This is not to say that there is nothing to be learned from such investigation, but that strong efforts need to be made toward internalizing the information. Insight applied to the knowledge of process will yield that which is of substance and significance. Without this thinking procedure, the work remains superficial. The piece may express an awareness of that which is timely; however, it represents only a mannerism, an exercise in style based on a popular process.

The situation is saved by the fact that mannerism is short-lived. When the popularity fades, the participants are left emptied of their mainstay, prompting one to

question the credibility of self and cause. This difficult moment or period of self-assessment is of great value, for out of this state of questioning and uncertainty new insights arise. This moment serves to initiate a personal sense of inquiry, an attitude which is continually present in the creative individual. For some, however, this questioning period is relatively brief as they begin the cycle once more with the new born fashion. The problem thus becomes perpetual.

One explanation for this situation is that there is the distinct possibility that technical information may be taken in isolation. Some of this may be attributed to the presentation of material in capsulized form. This may arouse only a singular kind of association in the minds of many. Mental cross connections must be made. Without interpretation, the information and derived products remain close to face value. Essentially, it is the individual's aesthetic which serves to synthesize or extend the artistic statement regardless of technique. This kind of personal integrity lends support and credence to work of a highly technical nature. The individual and not the current method must reign as the governing factor for artistic endeavors.

One indication of the attitude nurturing the dependence upon technique appears in the form of the incessant question, "How do I achieve this?" Rarely asked is, "How do I use this achievement?" The first question can be quite simply answered through dispensing raw technical information.

This is the easiest area in which to teach, respond and excel. The second question, however, prompts one to consciously examine how technique should be applied to the unique individual statement. If one continues to make this probing inner inquiry, the resulting work will employ technique from the basis of a firm personal standpoint. The quality of this work will be solidified further and made capable of enduring and outlasting the current phase.

With so many exciting developments on the upswing, the majority remains content to stay abreast with the ongoing technical methods and mannerisms. This in itself is no small task, but it seems to me that an important ingredient is lacking - the sense of personal search. Such pursuit demands a critical consciousness of that within and careful selection from the surrounding proceedings. This searching attitude requires that one be able to see and extract from all recent advancements that which is personally applicable, then to proceed to synthesize and project this material beyond only that which is apparent.

The challenge which presently exists is to regard the new as a cause for reformation, enlightenment and a knowing application of insight. May we teach ourselves and others the need to be vigilant, and to be wary of the acceptance of science without conscience.

How does one distinguish between the mechanically beautiful object and that which is a gimmick?

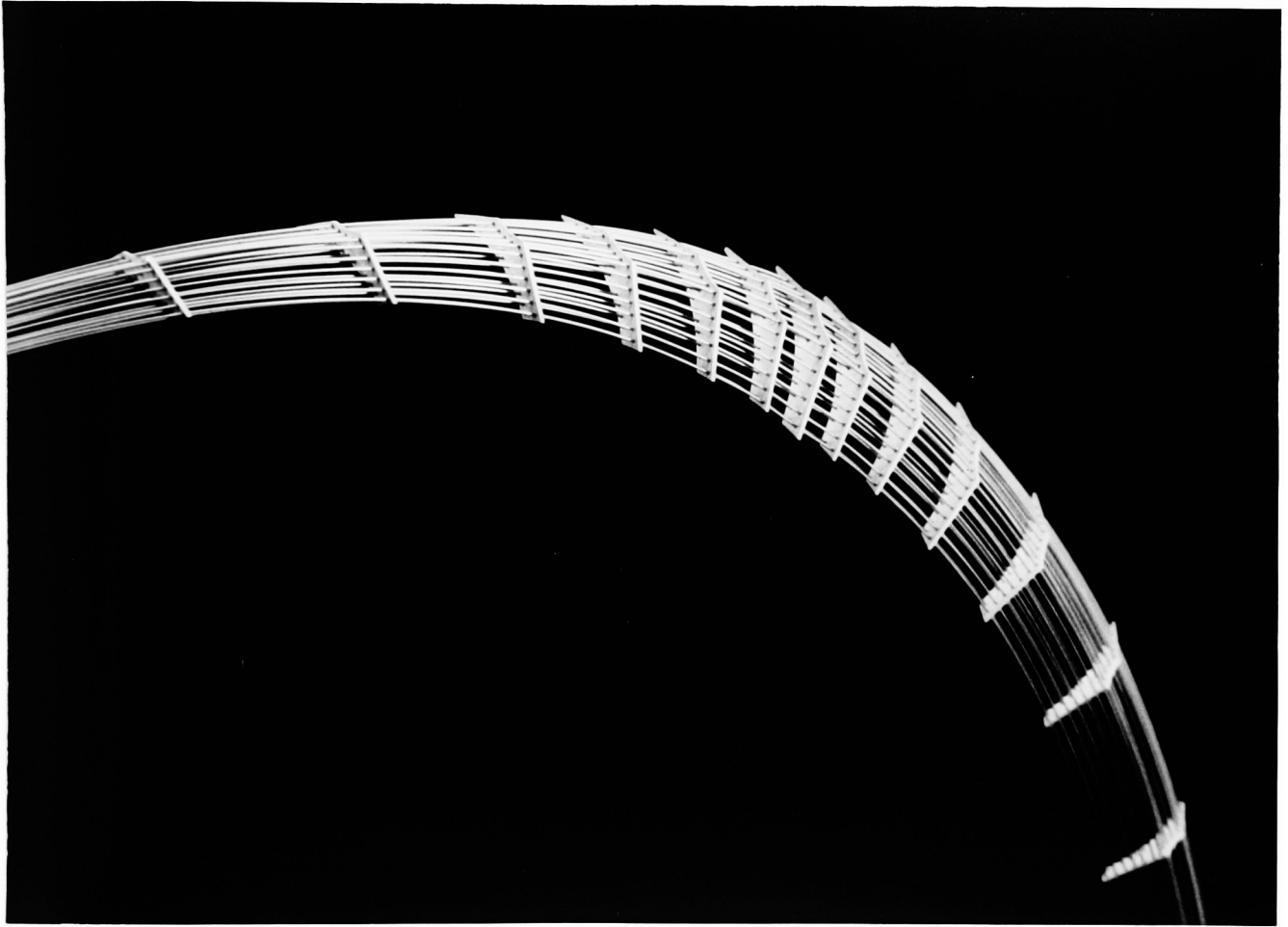
The gimmick or gadget is a particular brand of mechanical object. It ranges from the dime store item to the executive toy. One important factor in defining such is that the gimmick is designed to be popular. It is not so much that this object is mass produced, but that the primary concern is that of being intended for consumption. Quite often linked to this is the promotional thrust. Where advertising is involved, there is a concerted effort to capitalize on the ingenuity of the object. Although such attempts are in earnest, such efforts taint this item as a part of some scheme or money-making plot. One suspects deception at work.

At times the gadget is used to suggest some cheap kind of toy or labor saving device, thus releasing you from those endless hours of drudgery. The gimmick also has recently achieved great heights of sophistication in the manner of the executive toy. The gadget can possess quite admirable and delightful qualities, whether bordering on 'camp' or appealing to the high-tech sensation. Regardless of what level or form the gimmick may assume, it remains firmly based on the 'novelty for novelty's sake' idea. Its value is for the purpose of amusement.

The mechanically beautiful object exists in its own right. The main difference between such object and the gimmick lies in the intent. The beautiful mechanism is less

concerned with popularity than with satisfying the curiosity or self-indulgence of the maker. It is more involved with the process of invention than with the resulting object and exploitation thereof. For this reason, the intent is perhaps more genuine than that of the gimmick. In the case of the unique object, it is an inner motivation which spurs on the activity of invention rather than a catering to the consumer market. Aesthetics rate high among the priorities of the beautiful object along with other considerations and requirements of the purist attitude. Rather than provide a simple amusement, the beautiful mechanism is to be regarded as a serious piece with the intent to describe poetic movement.

While, no doubt, there exists the gimmick which is by essence a beauteous object and a beautiful object which pretends to be so by relying on gimmickery, there is rarely a problem of distinguishing between the two. One is made certain when the object stirs within a profound sense that what lives in our hands is something truly remarkable.



Flexible Column #6

I am thinking of my long affair with rods, recalling the initial realizations and the gradual way they assumed a more purified state. These rods have continued to be a predominant material theme in my work, proceeding not only instinctively, but also through a guiding consciousness.

Before the rods came lines. My first important piece of jewelry was a carved aluminum brooch containing a large section of black acrylic with machined shallow grooves. Although the grooved part was not an outstanding aspect of the piece design, I did enjoy the organized texture of the linear repetition. It was at this time that I had been attempting to join aluminum through brazing. At a particular moment, I caught sight of a bundle of brazing rods. This seemed to make a connection with the grooved plastic part of the brooch. Instead of orderly machined grooves, why not a collection of parallel wires or rods? A simple reversal of negative to positive. This thought was followed by a piece which incorporated a tight bundle of steel welding rods. Because of the original derivation from the brazing rods, I have persisted in using the term 'rod' in describing the wire elements in my work.

In the next step the rods were presented in a similar bundled manner, yet instead the rods were held slightly spaced out by some metal plates having a consistent hole pattern. The purpose of this design was to give the illusion of being solid and to save on weight. Also, I found this rod bundle could be squeezed slightly, producing a

sensation which was to stay in my mind.

Following this came some pieces incorporating the single rod used decoratively or functionally as a pin stem. I believe the pin stem should be a major consideration in the overall design. The format of these pieces involved the idea of 'sources' with extensions. These extensions, whether a pin stem or otherwise, required a material of some stamina. Stainless steel proved to be most suitable by being unequalled in strength, corrosion resistance and color appeal.

With my appreciation and belief in this material growing steadily, I came across the work of Frei Otto. His research on flexible cable structures was extremely exciting to me. A particular model for a radio tower caught my attention, prompting a strong recollection of my earlier bundled rods. His tower model impressed me with its essential nature. It caused me to realize that my previous rod work has only been serving in an accessory fashion to the overall design. It was time to dispense with such decoration.

The rod itself was pure, a simple, yet live, element. A collective structure of such elements would be able to amplify this true quality, if not embody this quality. With this in mind, I immediately launched the flexible column project in homage to Frei Otto with hopes of expanding upon his idea. My interpretation, however, was that of a jeweler. I envisioned that these tensile structures might

eventually be able to assume a neckpiece form.

The first few column trials were simplistic but informative by proving that these were sensational structures. I began to observe just what factors contributed to the differences in flexing behavior. Each column added more to experience, but also deepened my awareness of the complexities involved. One particularly disastrous model caused me to realize that I had a great deal to master in terms of understanding the nature of these sensitive forms. This model also pointed out clearly that I was no engineer. I needed to organize the variables and proceed systematically in order to isolate that which was successful from that which failed. A final working format materialized - with tables, formulas governing growth factors, frequencies and detailed patterns.

In establishing an orderly attitude and way of thinking, I found I had developed a clear set of criteria regarding the destiny of these models. For this formal neckpiece, I imagined a specific kind of presentation, one of dual nature. This column needed to be able to be displayed in its neckpiece format, plus be shown in its released state accompanied by its separate clasp. In this way, the column would maintain the sense of its multiple function as both an object for manipulation and an object for wear. This would require integrating two different sets of priorities. Satisfying these requirements involved more than I could anticipate.

While previously my column concerns were exclusively toward governing the flexing behavior, now came the need to apply this system to the functional, circular format. Not only was the clasp a problem, but it was directly related to the treatment of the rod ends and the column configuration itself. This situation proved to be a major obstacle by threatening most of the established criteria. For one, I realized the clasp would dictate column form. A drastic simplification of form seemed to be the only way to accommodate the catch. I would have to relinquish control over the column's flexing characteristics, thus losing much of the beauty and sensitivity which I had sought to acquire. For joining the ends, a box clasp arrangement did seem to be adequate; however, the criteria insisted that it be double-barreled. The result was something rather bulky. There were numerous other considerations to be dealt with such as maximizing the column ends and controlling rod slippage. It became apparent that every problem was thoroughly inter-related to all other aspects of the neckpiece. An adjustment of one feature would disturb and dictate the nature of the rest. Every step involved compromise.

After considerable lengthy and hard-core assessment, I did arrive at a final, presentable product. To obtain a result which accounted for so many months of exploratory model making was a mild thrill. The simplicity of this final object, however, did seem to be a relatively small description of all the preceding efforts and intensity.

While the criteria of my original vision did suffer in the hastening for solution, the pursuit of this project did acquaint me with the prospect of resolution. I find "resolution" to be not as much concerned with providing answers for problems as it is with surviving within limitations.

To summarize, I see my body of work as being the result of a certain consciousness. It represents the by-product of successive realizations, an understanding of the extension of a single element. The original rod idea began so innocently. It passed through decorative phases and moved on to where the rods assumed a major importance. Overall, I see that an exchange has taken place. That gained in thinking has resulted in a more minimalized form. Without question, the gradual elimination of excess has been in conjunction with the expansion of sensibility. Such is refinement.

With these admissions, I allow myself a certain satisfaction in seeing this rod concept evolve.

It has begun to rain. The stillness stirred, the restrained released, the expected and long awaited now fulfilled.

This arousal is also a kind of baptismal quench, a refreshing saturation of cleansing, renewal, initiation. Now relieved of the burdens of my previous state, I receive sanction for the next avenue. I accept this passively for the first time in months and peacefully for the first time in ages.

I have finally cast off that vacuum which was once sucking from my heart. Somehow the transition slipped in. Soul stirring once more. Purpose resides again. The small seeds of striving are now attended to, receiving nourishment. Fed with fire, they grow, becoming inflamed, impassioned, both grossly swollen and gloriously full. The taste of such I cannot do without. A devastated body, a delivered spirit!

Cool, now cool, the rain washes away catharis.

MEMORANDA

The memorandum is a brief comment or explanation, a printed reference set apart from the text. Each written item corresponds to a piece of metalwork. The statement may be taken as a complement or extension of the material object. As a reflection, the memorandum may be considered independently.

Memorandum

Form with Bundled Rods

A piece reads much like a sentence. As a sentence, it is a statement. The initial word, or form in this case, has an original definition whose eventual character and meaning are shaped by innuendo. It is from the careful choice and placement of these elements that the message is modified. The refined piece reflects the skill of this synthesis.

In this instance, the organism is disclosed and suspended from its supportive, bundled sheath. The same genetics which imply the bud also shape the stem, indigenous yet different. Here one uniformly ordered structure is the vehicle for a particular form of inflection.

Vocabulary, grammar, syntax are all literary tools which also apply effectively to visual design. Manipulation within these structures which I establish for myself gives my greatest reward. Moving metal is merely accessory to this need.



Form with Bundled Rods

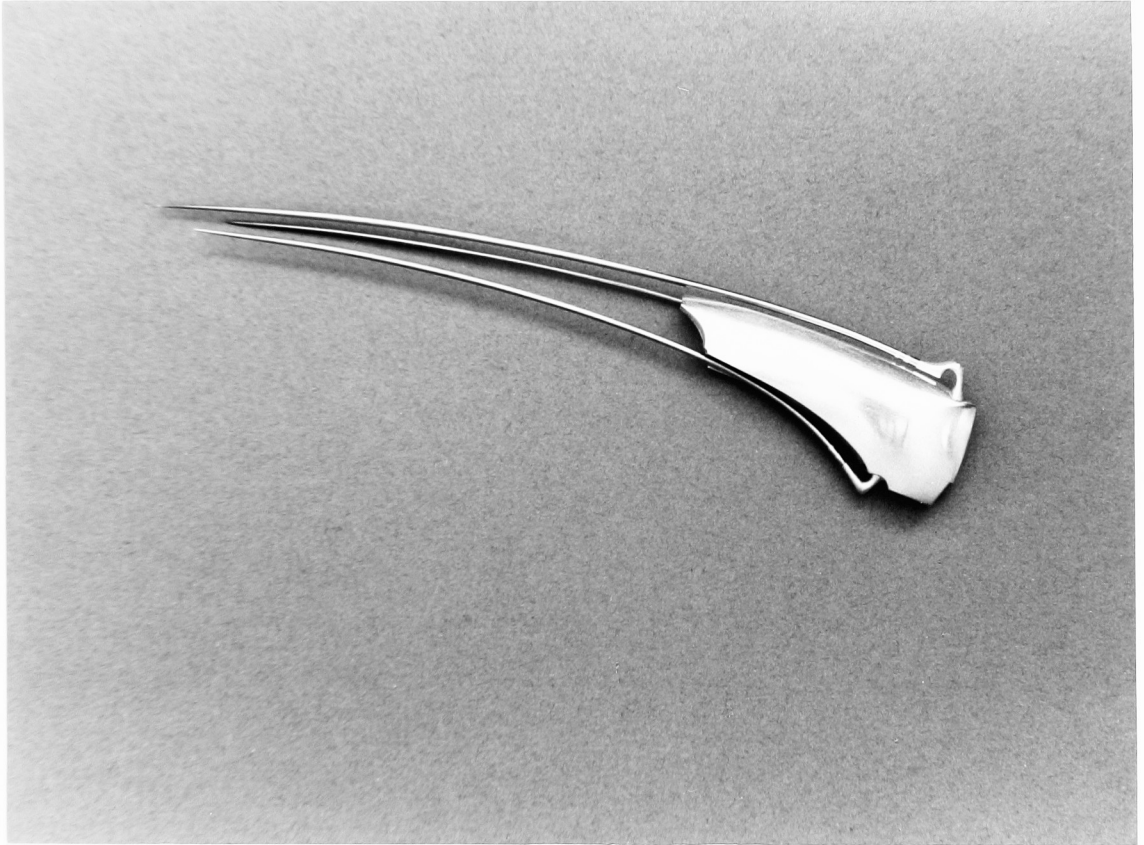
Memorandum

Three Lines and Form

Nuances in form indicate a suggestion for change. That change may jolt suddenly with erratic behavior, or yield smoothly in a manner of meld. In each transition resides a reason for what precedes and follows.

Termination may often loosely dribble and drool, or it may sensibly waver, or be succinct. Poignancy is my purpose with this piece, and its termination is the key. Piercing effects a stimulation which a restive, full form attempts to deny.

The crucial, the precarious, the eccentric are important in these embodies of mine. Delicacy becomes strong; weakness undermines by subversion. A startling denotation can take on expanded, altered connotations.



Three Lines and Form

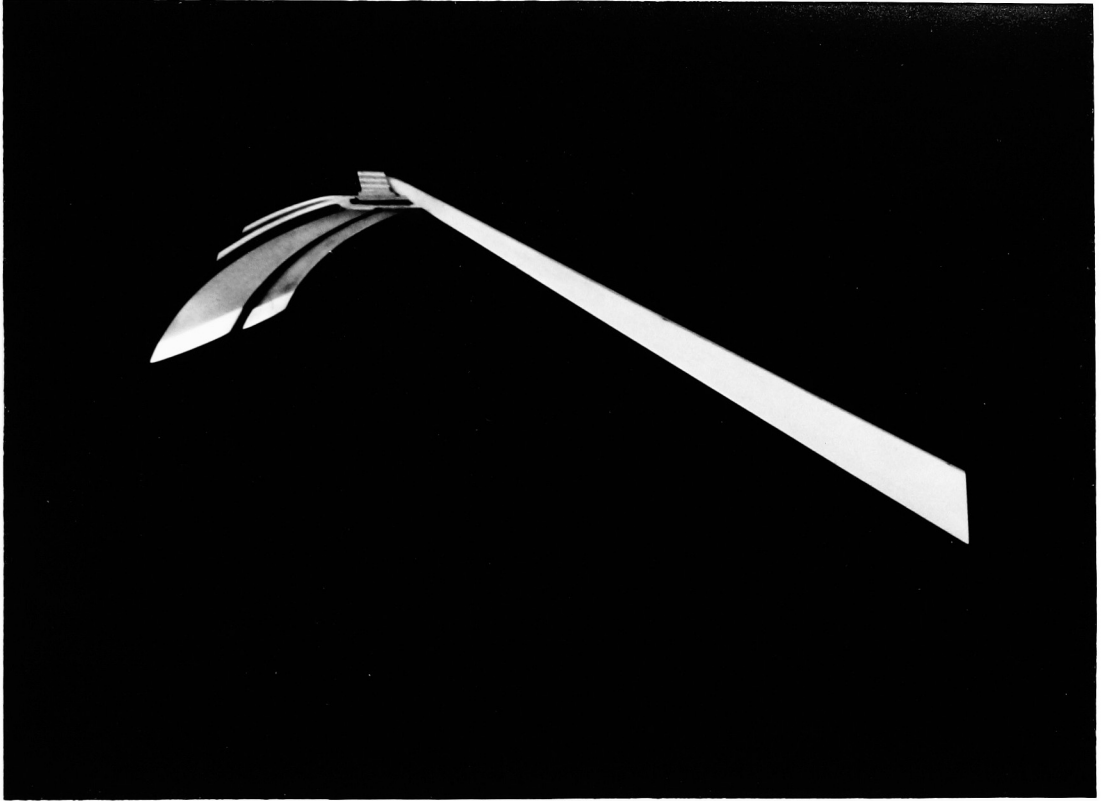
Memorandum

The Cutting Edge

There is beauty in the cruel edge. Organic forms frequently exhibit this quality. Take for instance a shell, the thistle, a blade of harsh grass. Often the most simple of organisms carry a wicked structure enabling it to strike out in some small way at the environment. Humans, not endowed with such attributes, have the virtue of being able to fabricate their own cutting edges and cruel implements.

The actual forms of such instruments (slicing, piercing or projecting) are based on pure geometry. Two acutely intersecting planes form the knife's edge. A vastly diminished cone makes for the spear point or pin stem. The long-bow displays an elementary curve. The bullet is a simple sphere or cone. Their formal beauty is visually striking. In function and principle, simplicity is the essence of these forms.

Despite such purity, the instruments of war in past history have often been lavishly embellished and grossly decorative. This would seem to indicate a worship either of the item itself for its beauteous form and power mystique or for an omnipotence that weapon may bring to a civilization. It is ironic that these implements of violence inspire an almost religious reverence. A keen fervor for the keen edge.



Cutting Edges

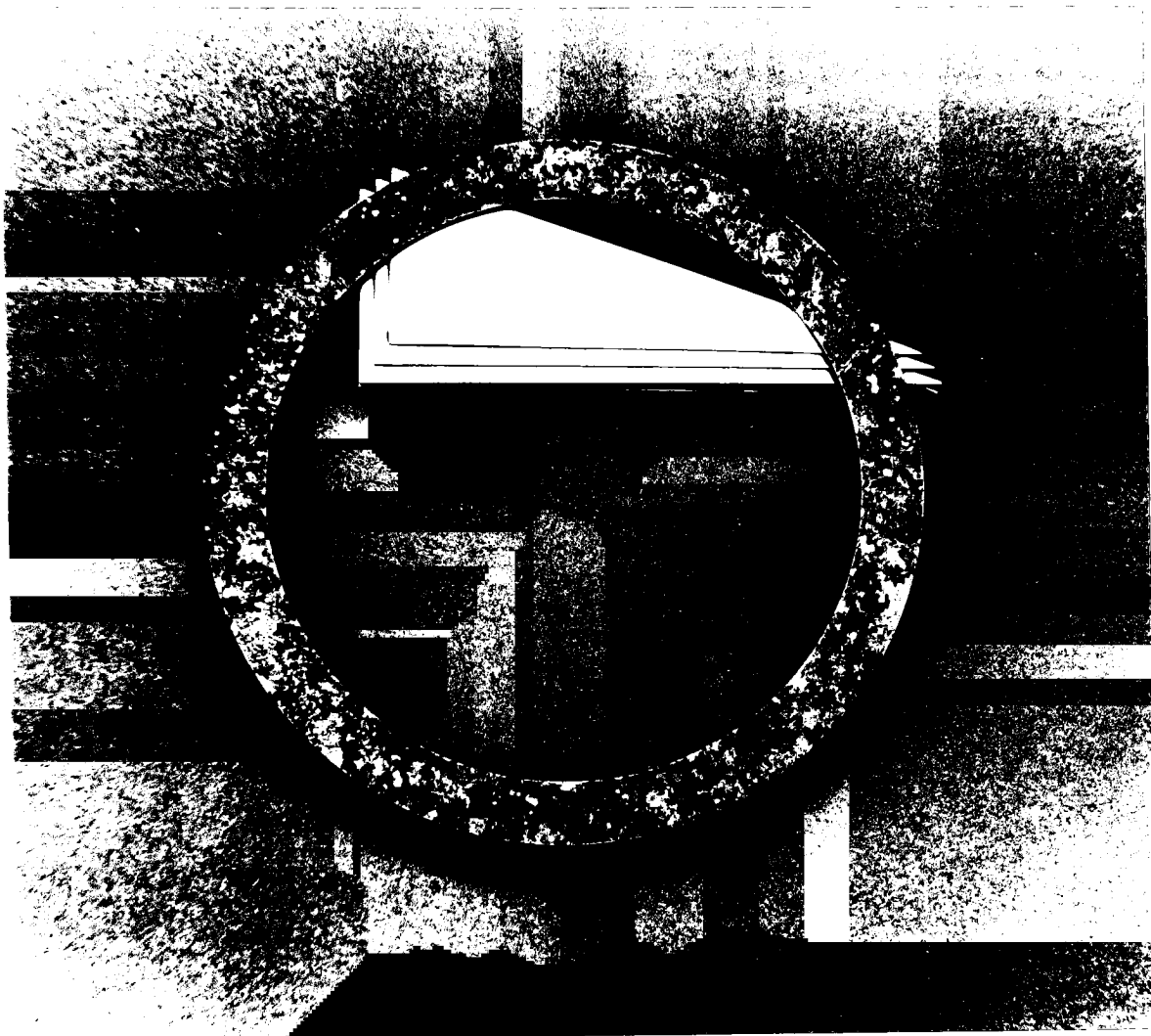
Memorandum

Violation

Given any pure instance, the temptation is to commit an act of desecration. Violation is a pleasurable activity.

"Violation" is a word heavily laced with immorality. Morals are like laws in that they seem to plead for that which is askew. Mercy is granted in the way of violation. For instance, any pure form or formality seems to reside or bask in this holy, untouched state. As easily as this rests, it may be rendered impotent in an instant. A simple act, a small remark, whether in rude blatancy or merely insinuation serves to draw the accusing finger. Oh, but to see the unassailable fall, to be the cause for this desecration, what would give far greater reward!

To be crass and irreverent in the face of perfection is easy, and perhaps easier still is to let things pass in submission. There is, however, merit in the retort - a response swift, expert and cutting deep, to nobly suffer the pain of consequence, and in so doing have the clear conscience which decisive action brings.



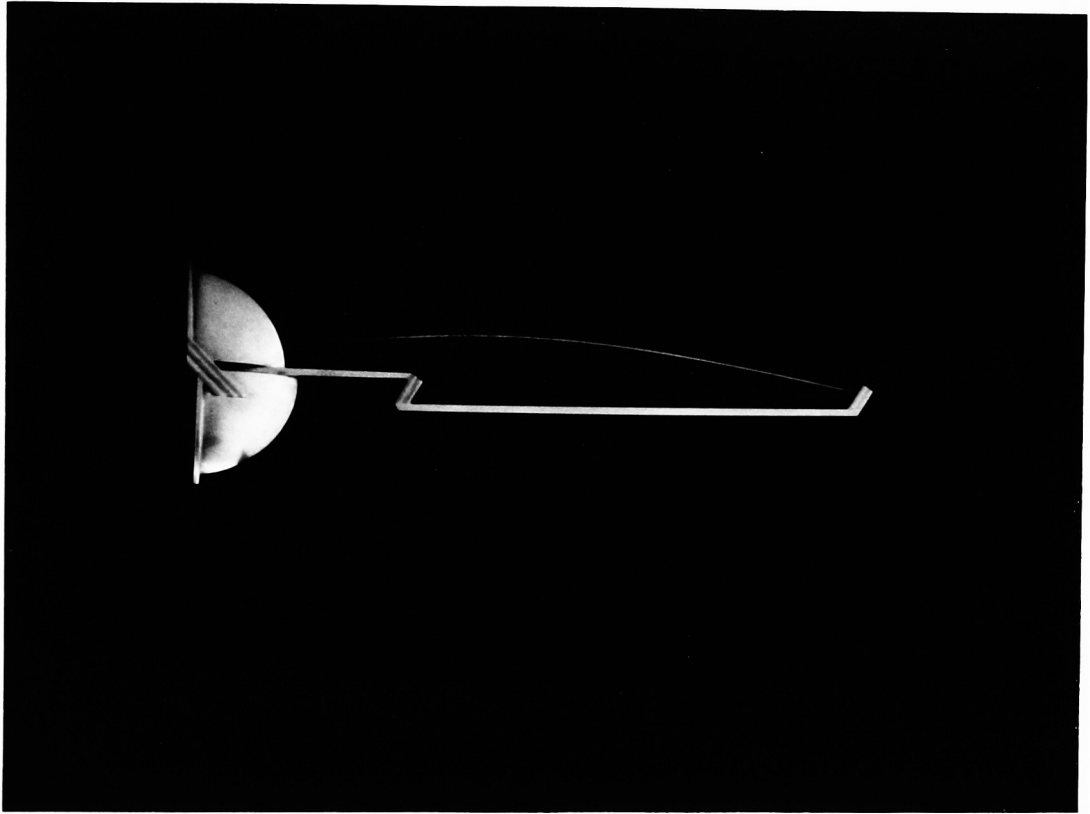
Bracelet/Violation

Memorandum

Synapse

Synapse describes a manner of passage. Unlike a corridor which directs in a channelling of course, the synapse describes a more leaping livelihood.

It springs forth, splitting its source, and homes in on its destination with surprising speed and magnetic attraction. The path is a projection, both spurting and soaring from this electric impulse. The receiving end arrests, snagging the path of flight for a brief moment before prompting ignition for a new surge.



Synapse

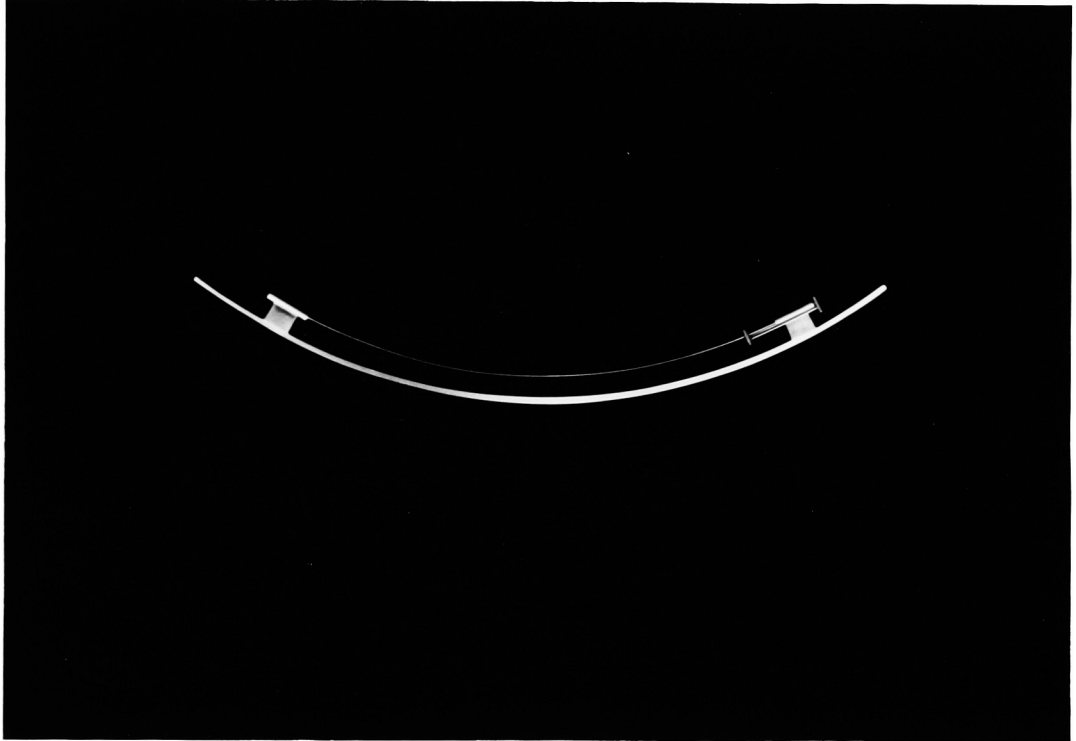
Memorandum

Arc Pin

Arcs are brief intimations of the circle. They have the uncanny ability to suggest continuation more strongly than any length of straight line by reason of describing a dimension of fullness. The more extended the arc, the more we expect from it, for acceleration increases when approaching the round, ever hopeful for completion.

This bowed effect implies a certain tension, as if at any moment to spring back flat under gravity's persuasion. In another respect, it also has a strangely swinging quality, that of release.

Is it swinging or springing?



Arc Pin

Memorandum

Notation

An awareness of "notation" amounts to the realization that there are systems of expression. These representative systems assume form in a kind of visual code, one both beneficial and perplexing.

The presence of this code is of service to us by offering information in an abstract symbolic fashion. This requires that the expression be clarified and distilled to its essence. Owing to this compact abbreviated form, such manner of description makes it available worldwide. The expression, therefore, is made explicit to many.

There are, however, stipulations. While the intent may lie in a purified message, one can only expect partial results. In the process of clarification, inevitably large loopholes in meaning are left. Further still, there remains ample room for interpretation. Connotation is generous, yet mystifying in a way which thwarts this mission. Worse still, the comprehension of any characterized information is based on the presumption of an understanding audience. With this, the stenographer's notes remain largely nonsense to most. One is left with the task of deciphering the maker's meaning.

Notwithstanding, all attempts to codify invariably fail. The message remains obscure.



Notation

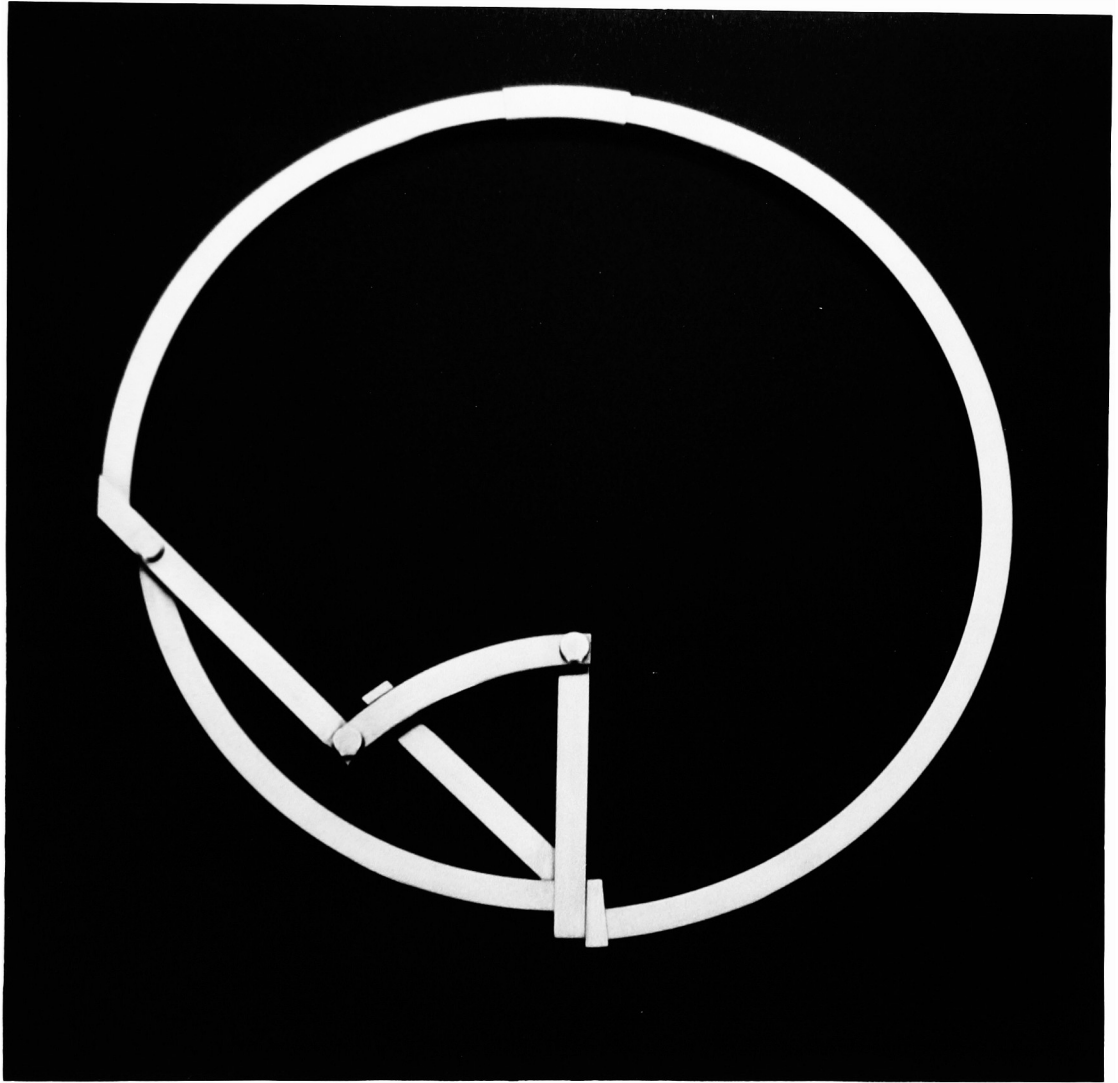
Memorandum

Pivotal Neckring

Machine! No artifice. No affectation. Machines are quite clearly intentional things. Explicit in design, the product is the reflection of the purpose.

In appearance, this machine exhibits only that which is essential. While such is prudence, it is also very stark. These rigid members may be condemned to a life of restriction, yet it is only from their connections that comes the potential for their release. The pivot sends forth all engaged on its circumscribed course, and those related willingly comply.

True to its character, and executed in a brutal fashion, this device proceeds in all due manner with parts shifting, sliding and swinging. The attendant of these motions dutifully performs this task without compensation or regard for the body.



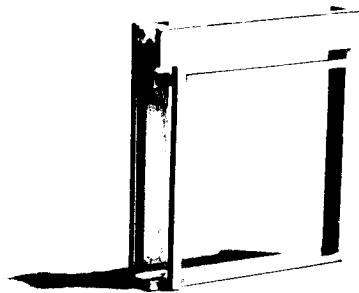
Pivotal Neckring

Memorandum

A Diamond Ring

Never is the diamond more beautiful than when lying in state, unset, unbound. The ultimate of all substance sits supreme. The most worthy act of veneration would be to leave this royal matter least touched or tainted by some popular contrivance. Unpardonable sin to display such splendor in some prosaic way!

While the ideal solution would include some manner of levitation, such is not in my hands. Instead I offer the least as best. Although this is at most merely a compromise, it is only through the principle of seeking to suspend that noble matter may receive just measure.



Diamond Ring

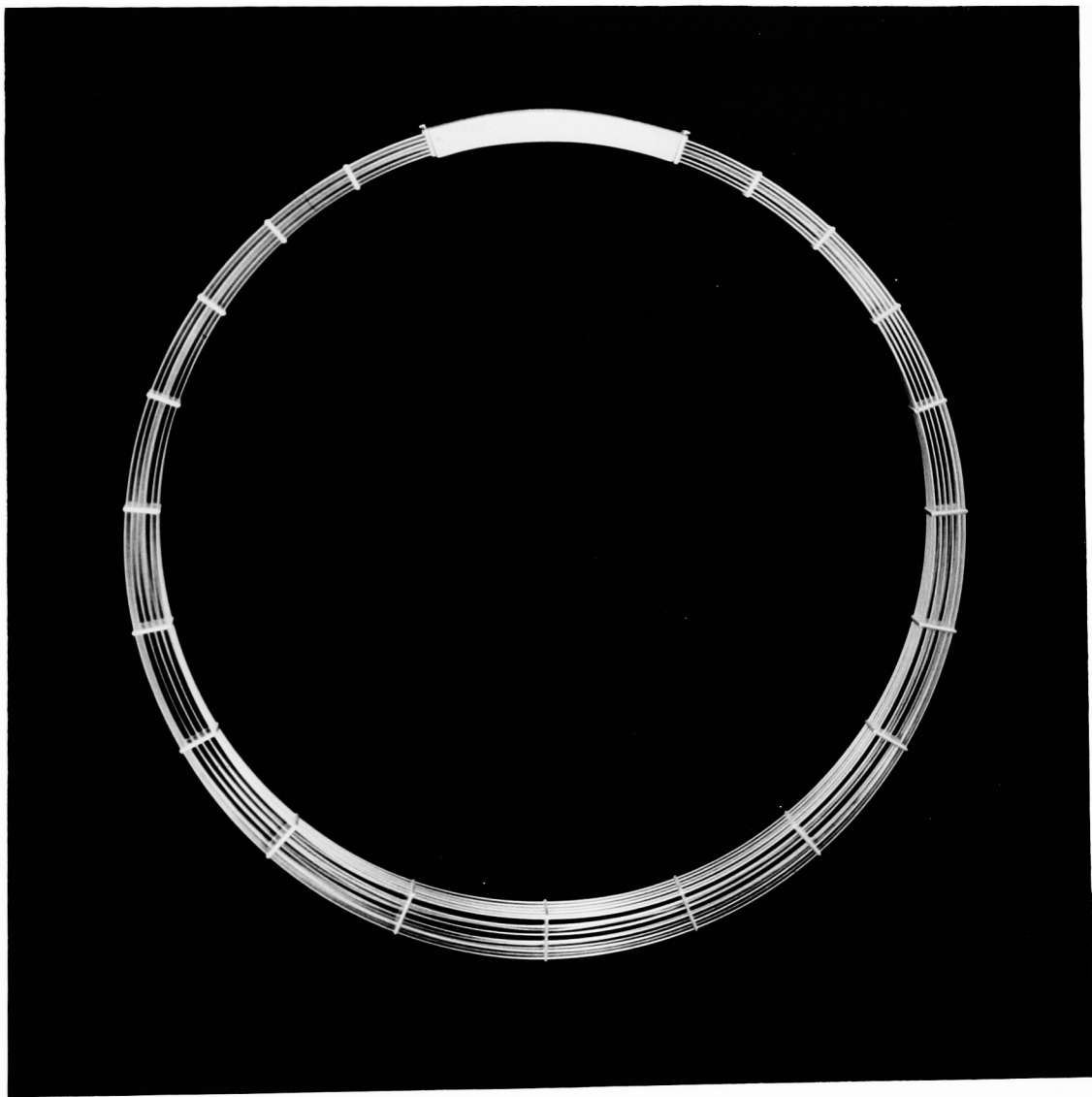
Memorandum

Neckpiece/Flexible Column #12

The flexible column is an entity possessing a body voluminous yet light by sheer essence. It is a slender, effluvial animal, a vertebrate of some phantom phylum.

Endowed with a nearly human nature, the column displays both a temper and a distinct manner of behavior. While being rather supple and resilient, it also endures, performing with stamina. There is a degree of forgiveness, obedience if you will, yet one is always reminded of this structure's volition. It exercises sensibly and with provocative qualities as vital as it is sensuous. In being so animate, it responds to all outward affectations by consenting to seduction, coercion and whim - willingly, naively.

To seize upon this liberated thing, to render it fixed, to place it under forcible arrest for the reason of purpose, I cannot help but think that I have been the cause for the domestication of the spirit.



Neckpiece/Flexible Column #12

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CONCLUSION

This perception and premise of the inherent condition of contrast holds that resolution is found with endeavor. The preceding work, therefore, is to be regarded as a collection of personal attempts. Whether expressed as a general dilemma or conveyed via creative fragments, I find that the essence of difference can only be circumscribed. The result of a basic disunion yields a consciousness both compelled and provoked. Out of this ambiguous situation, the singular presence can prevail. The individual's efforts, acts and works consistently speak as lasting proof of the human ability.

The issue is not that one must learn to live within contrasts; one always has. The major point is the realization that the living process is to be guided by individuation. In whatever form this may assume, one commits the self to search while admitting to life's immersion. By projecting and receiving, the individual proceeds to reveal and formulate the unknown.

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APPENDIX

Summary of Flexible Column Notes

The information which follows has been condensed from my sketchbooks and notes which were compiled during the flexible column project. The column models are listed in order of execution.

- #1 Circular cross section -
equal template frequency, consistent configuration

Use of punch press to produce circular units. Flexes easily, wires can be felt sliding through framework. Outstanding feature - twisting, torsion causing physical constriction between templates, a la Chinese finger prison. This creates attractive visual effect besides.

- #2 Rectangular cross section -
equal template frequency, consistent configuration

Very simple, not very informative. Much like #1. Lacking in adventure.

- #3 Triangular (right angle) cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, consistent configuration

Playing it safe, but also testing to see if template frequency affects flex. More frequent intervals at ends increases stiffness slightly, but this may have to do with the fact that there is poor leverage toward the ends. I observe that rods indicate the difference of inner and outer radii when the column is flexed. There is a sense of axis in structure. Column flexes more easily in one direction than in others.

- #4 Hyperbola cross section -
incomplete model

The objective here was to go beyond repetition of identical templates. Wanted series to achieve a gradual transformation of shape. A real bomb.

Unable to thread with rods because of non-systematic hole shifting from one template to the next. Holes need organization. I failed to comprehend the implications of this idea.

- #5 Hyperbola cross section -
equal template frequency, configuration modulates to rectangular shape in center.

With changing template shape within series, holes have to be shifted around. Rod crossings create interesting visual effects. Moire. Severe hole friction, so column bends rather than flexes. Core rod placed at edge of template suffers from stress (annealed state doesn't help). Needs central placement for support from other rods. Reminiscent of St. Louis Arch when curved.

- #6 Irregular cross section -
template frequency increasing at center, dual tapered configuration

Experiment with template frequency and more daring degree of increased proportion of template size differential. Disaster. Totally unexpected result. Attempting too much with two factors led to gross, sudden rod shifts in center. Counter sinking holes on both sides to reduce friction, yet the center problem negates any benefits from this. Column configuration too complex in terms of manufacture and too understated visually. Difficult to perceive shape distinctly except via touch. Need more simplicity/clarity in terms of shape. Very wicked edges. Would make an inhospitable neckpiece.

- #7 Triangular (isosceles) cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered configuration

Simplified template provides a most satisfactory appearance, also making it easier to draw up patterns. Have established formula table system. In this column, growth factors too extreme. Unable to either bend or flex effectively stemming from severe hole friction. For the most part the structure is entirely constricted, but yields the discovery of an action/counteraction effect. Wonderful, curious, bizarre. Will concentrate on this series and work for applying this toward the neckpiece. Model in itself is not a success, yet definitely reveals promise and potential.

- #8 Triangular (isosceles) cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered
configuration

Essentially same formula as #7, but with revisions. Reduced template growth factors and hole sizes at end in order to preserve action/counteraction effect. Fortunately it is still here, but to a lesser degree. Am very pleased with result. Enjoyed playing with it for an entire evening. It is very responsive, yet still subtle and sensitive. Beginning to feel a sense of control over this project. It is time for the neckpiece. The clasp comes next.

After developing the clasp (see notes which follow) I return to column studies.

- #9 Square cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered
configuration

Very plain, very simple. Action/counteraction of #7 and #8 is gone. Column behavior is no longer interesting. Qualities of flex have been usurped on account of the need for the clasp. Anti-climactic. What remains now is to develop a way of keeping rods from sliding out of the framework.

- #10 Square cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered
configuration

Attempt to prevent rods from sliding out of framework. Have threaded the ends of all the rods and tapped every other hole of the last template on either side. When screwed together it results in having odd numbered rods attached to the left side and even numbered rods affixed to the right. The column flexes normally, and one can feel the rods moving in alternate directions. An ingenious idea. But the column ends have only half the total number of rods extending past the last template. Looks like a half-plucked chicken. Unacceptable.

- #11 Square cross section -
template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered
configuration

Attempt to inhibit rod slippage again. Central template of the series is of double thickness with holes being threaded from both sides. Twice the

usual number of rods approach from either side and are screwed into this central plate. A takeoff from #10, but of less success. With this version there is a very noticeable central weakness when the column is flexed. Not good.

- #12 Neckpiece (sterling) square cross section - template frequency increasing at ends, dual tapered configuration

Solved the rod slippage problem by capping off both rod ends with small segments of tubing. Clasp is a kind of double-barreled box catch. Am pleased with the stream lined spring mechanism which holds the last template in place.

Overall, the entire piece works. The last several months can be described as a large slow process of clarification and simplification. My original criteria has been threatened and challenged, but to my amazement it still stands. Am not entirely sold on the "simple solution is the best solution" principle, but at least in this case it has left me with a presentable product. I am left with a vague, but pleasant feeling.

Further Comments

Neckpiece Criteria

- Order of Priorities -
1. An object of aesthetic value
 2. One possessing manipulative qualities
 3. One able to maintain its wearable function

The Column Neckpiece must have two manners of presentation -

1. Displayed enclosed in the circular format
2. Displayed outstretched with accompanying, yet separate clasp

Objective: The dual manner of presentation preserves the sense of multiple function. This is an object for manipulation as well as an article to be worn.

The clasp presented a problem. What should I do with the loose rod ends? The most logical answer was to put them into a box catch. I proceeded to construct three variations of the box catch for series #7 and #8 which are interchangeable. They all worked, but the rod ends had to be cropped quite short in order for both of them to fit into the same single box catch. It was possible to have a very long box catch; however, this would begin to intrude on the neckpiece appearance. To maintain grace as an outstretched entity, the column terminations had to be as long as possible. One way to achieve optimum end length was to have a double-

barreled box clasp, thus doubling the possible length of the rod ends. This required that the series configuration have a shape which allowed for the parallel placement of ends. Only a square or rectangular series conveniently allowed for this. I opted for the square series as the most practical solution for the clasp problem, thus sacrificing the major thrust of the previous experimental studies.

Midway through the project, I switched from music wire (which rusts) to stainless spring steel rods. The latter gave a softer flex, but was still effective. This necessitated a special order from an obscure company which required having the wire cut from a large coil and then straightened. The torsion machine which was used for the straightening left a slight twist in the wire. Unfortunately the twist was visible and furthermore caused the rods to flip around within the column's structure upon flexing. I was reduced to sanding and polishing every rod.

Although the models were of an experimental nature, I did see them as being worthy of presentation. To improve their appearance the base metal of brass was plated. Silver plating did not work, as flexing caused it to crack where the template joined the core rod. Tin plating provided the only alternative and proved to be acceptable.

I would like to offer a few closing remarks in regard to this Column Neckpiece affair. I have certainly developed a deep appreciation for the numerous factors which existed in this problem. The task of assimilating all aspects into

a unified final form became a compelling, if not obsessive preoccupation. The most difficult part lay in the act of choosing between alternatives. In making choices, I did attempt to preserve those qualities which were deserving over those of less significance. The tangible results, I feel, was not nearly as important as the processing of information and intuition. The experience has yielded not only that which can be gained from experiment, but a firm standpoint through which further work may proceed.

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